



You may have heard that if you're buying or selling a home from 1 June 2007 you will need to have a **Home Information Pack**.

On 22nd May 2007, however, the Government announced that the date would be put back to 1st August 2007. From that date, all houses offered for sale in England and Wales (with more than 4 bedrooms) will require a Home Information Pack (HIP) to be prepared by the seller before they or their estate agent can market the property, or face a fine of £200.

HIPs contain a large amount of complex legal information and solicitors are best placed to prepare and interpret these packs. At Curwens, as property specialists, we can offer our clients expert advice in preparing and interpreting HIPs.

The Home Information Pack will contain information that is currently compiled by a property lawyer at the conveyancing stage of the house sale, including:

- An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) prepared by a Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA) which tells you how energy efficient the property is. Your home will be assessed to review its performance in terms of energy used per square metre of floor area, energy efficiency based on fuel costs and the environmental impact based on Carbon Dioxide (CO²) emissions. Your home will then be given a rating according to performance.
- Other compulsory documents, such as an index of contents, sale statement, searches (such as a Local Authority Search, Water and Drainage Search) and evidence of title
- Optional documents, such as a Home Condition Report, guarantees

The responsibility and costs of obtaining the HIP will be borne by the seller (currently the buyer pays for the searches).

It is anticipated that a HIP will be valid for a period of one year although this has yet to be confirmed by the government. However, searches contained in the HIP are valid from the buyer's point of view for 3 months only. Once the HIP expires, you will need to produce another Pack to carry on marketing your property. Contact us now for more details at conveyancing@curwens.co.uk